

REMARKS

Claims 12 through 23 were pending in the application. With this Amendment, independent claims 12 and 21 are amended, and a number of the dependent claims are amended to reflect the respective amendments to the independent claims. Claim 23 is cancelled. Applicant respectfully submits that the claims as amended and presented herein patentably distinguish over the art of record, as set forth below.

Claims 12 through 23 were rejected under §103(a) in view Jackson '196. Applicant does not acquiesce in the Examiner's basis for the obviousness determination, namely that one skilled in the art may accidentally place a larger apron on the device of Jackson '196, and then would have found it obvious to try and use the device with the larger apron. Applicant respectfully submits that speculation of potential accidental use does not provide a reasonable basis for modification of a prior art device.

In any event, those skilled in the art recognize that the roller and apron configuration of the drafting device of Jackson '196 depends on significant tractive forces for the device to operate. The bottom roller pair is a drive roller pair, and the apron on the bottom roller pair must have enough tractive force to engage and drive the upper apron without slippage. In fact, at page 4, lines 43 through 49, the reference describes an embodiment for effective adjustment of the guide bars 57 and 58 "in order to permit tightening of the belts should they become slack or stretched during use." In other words, the belts cannot operate if they are slack or loose. One skilled in the art would immediately appreciate this and recognize that if a larger belt or apron were accidentally placed on the rollers, they should immediately be replaced with the proper size belt.

In addition, the structure of Jackson '196, regardless of the size of the belt or apron, does not include the structure of independent claim 12. Claim 12 calls for an apron to surround each of the top rollers, and for this apron to define a clamping surface with the bottom roller for the fiber bundles. In other words, the fiber bundles are conveyed between the apron and the surface of the bottom roller. In the configuration of Jackson '196, the aprons form a clamping surface with each other. Neither one of the aprons defines a clamping surface with an opposed roller, as called for in claim 12. Also, claim 12 calls for the deflection members to be disposed away from the clamping surface at a spacing interval between the deflection surface of the members and an axis of the top rollers so as to establish a running path for the aprons that results in a deformation of the aprons in a manner that causes the aprons to bow outward in the running path between the top rollers and the deflection members. Referring to Fig. 2 of Jackson '196, it is readily seen that the guide structure or deflection structure is disposed in the running path of the belt along the clamping surfaces of the belts, and is not disposed away from the clamping surface with the spacing interval called for in claim 12. Also, the path of the belts between the rollers and the deflection surfaces is straight and tensioned, and does not define a bowed outward profile for the aprons. Such a profile would render the device of Jackson '196 inoperable, as discussed above.

Independent claim 21 is amended herein to reflect the distinctions discussed above with respect to claim 1.


Accordingly, applicant respectfully submits that there is no motivation, suggestion, or other reason for one skilled in the art to modify the structure of Jackson '196 in a manner that would result in the apparatus and operational method of the

present independent claims. A modification of Jackson '196 in accordance with the present claims would render the device of Jackson '196 inoperable.

With the present Amendment, applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are allowable, and that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable action thereon is respectfully requested. The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at his convenience should he have any questions regarding this matter or require any additional information.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "S.E. Bondura", is written over a horizontal line.

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